

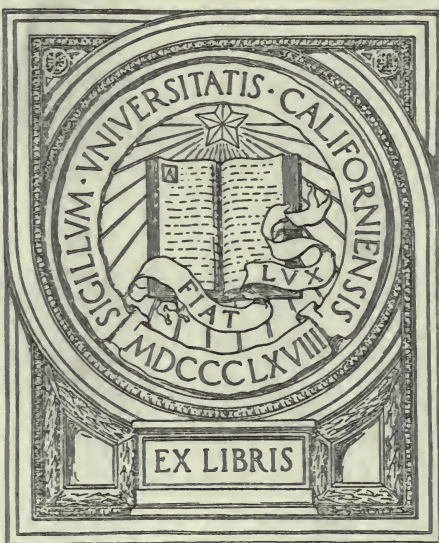
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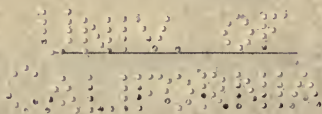
1899

THE BRIDE;

A DRAMA.

IN THREE ACTS.

BY JOANNA BAILLIE.



LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1828.

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TO THE
ASSOCIATES

Gift of Mr. Frank Marcham

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

RASINGA.

SAMARKOON, *his Brother-in-law.*

JUAN DE CREDÁ, *a Spanish Physician.*

SAMAR, *a Child, and Son of Rasinga.*

EHLEYPOLIE, }
MIHDOONY, } *Officers of Rasinga.*

Officers, Domestics, Robbers, Spearmen, &c.

WOMEN.

ARTINA, *Wife of Rasinga, and Sister of Samarkoon.*

MONTEBESA, *Mother of Rasinga.*

THE BRIDE.

SABAWATTE.

Nurse, Attendants, &c.

SCENE IN CEYLON.

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PREFACE.

To see the mind of a child awaking by degrees from the dreamy indistinctness of infancy to a clearer observation of what it beholds around, and a capacity to compare and to reason on the differences and resemblances which it perceives, is a most pleasing and interesting sight; so in a far greater degree does the rousing a race or nation from its infancy of ignorance and delusion, interest and excite every mind of any feeling or reflection. It was from this natural sympathy that I heard with the most sensible pleasure, some months ago, of the intended translation of my Drama, called "The Martyr," into the Cingalese language, as a work which might have some good effects upon a

people of strong passions, emerging from a state of comparative barbarism, and whose most effectual mode of receiving instruction is frequently that of dramatic representation, according to the fashion of their country.—A gentleman to whom Ceylon owes the great benefits conferred on a people by the pure and enlightened administration of justice, and to whose strenuous exertions they are also indebted for the invaluable institution of a trial by native juries,* entertained this opinion of the Drama in question, and afterwards did me the farther honour to suppose that I might write something of the kind, more peculiarly appropriate to the circumstances of that island, which would naturally have a stronger moral effect on the minds of its inhabitants. Pleased to be made, in the humblest

* The measures above alluded to are detailed in the Asiatic Journal for June 1827. They are the different measures which were carried into effect by Sir Alexander Johnston when he was President of His Majesty's Council in Ceylon, and of which Mr. Brougham made honourable mention in his speech on the Present State of the Law in February 1828.

degree, an instrument for their good, I most readily promised to endeavour at least to do so. And when they read this piece, or when it is brought before them in representation, they will regard it as a proof that their former judge and friend, though now absent and far separated from them, still continues to take a deep interest in their welfare. So considered, it will not fail to make an impression on their minds to which its own power or merit would be altogether unequal.

But should the individual effects of this Drama be ever so inconsiderable, the profits arising from its publication in England, may be the means of procuring translations into the Cingalese language of more able and useful works, and make, as it were, a first though a low step to an invigorating moral eminence. In these days when many excellent men are striving at the expence of health and ease, and all that is valued by the world, to spread the light of Christianity in the East; when the lamented Bishop Heber, with the disinterested devotion of an Apostle, joined to the mildness, libe-

rality, ability, courteousness, and good sense which promote and grace every laudable undertaking, has proved himself to be the genuine and noble follower of his blessed Master,—who will not be willing to lend some aid and encouragement to so excellent a purpose? I hope, and strongly hope that good will be derived, even from such a feeble effort as the present; and that the time will come when the different races of the East will consider every human creature as a brother; while Englishmen, under whose rule or protection they may live, will condemn that policy which founds its security upon ignorance. All past experience is unfavourable to the unmanly and ungenerous maxim. And in the present time, when perfect undisturbed ignorance cannot be obtained, the preservation of it in a middle state, to take no higher view of the subject, will be found to be a very precarious and expensive means of governing. But do I not wrong my countrymen, connected with the East, in supposing that the great proportion of them do entertain such narrow views? Of this at least I

am thoroughly persuaded, that if such a supposition does not wrong them at present, it will do so grievously some years hence: for the ignorance I speak of is that which stands opposed to the useful, simple learning which promotes industry and charity. Of those superfluous fantastical acquirements which the overstrained refinement of modern plans of education seems anxious to extend to the lower classes of society, I do not speak.

But I must beg leave to retract what I have said above as to making a first step in this desirable progress: one of Mrs. Hannah More's sacred Dramas was translated into the language of Ceylon, several, I believe many years ago, and was much liked and admired by the natives. A second or third, or any rank, so as it be a step at all, is honour enough for me.

And now let me address a few words to those whom I shall never see, whom many, *many* leagues of ocean divide from any spot of earth on which my foot hath ever rested or shall ever rest,—those for whose especial use the following Drama was

written, and in whose country the story of it is supposed to have happened.

I endeavour to set before you that leading precept of the Christian religion which distinguishes it from all other religions, the forgiveness of injuries. A bold and fiery-tempered people is apt to consider it as mean and pusillanimous to forgive; and I am persuaded that many a vindictive and fatal blow has been inflicted by those, whose hearts at the same moment have yearned to pardon their enemies. But Christians, who, notwithstanding the very imperfect manner in which they obey and have obeyed the precepts and example of Jesus Christ, do still acknowledge them, and have their general conduct influenced by them,—are *they* a feeble and unhonoured race? Look round you in your own land, in other countries most connected with your own, and you will acknowledge that this is not the case. You will therefore, I hope, receive in good part the moral of my story.

I wished to have found some event in the real history of Ceylon that might have served as a

foundation for my Drama, but not proving successful in my search, which, circumstanced as I am, could not but be very imperfect, I have of necessity had recourse to imagination. But there is one person or character in it which is truly your own, though placed in an imaginary situation, and any country in the world might be proud to claim it.—“Remember,” said the son of the first Adigar of the Candian country to his elder brother, who had clung for protection to his wretched mother, when she and all her children were condemned to death by a late king of Candy,—“Remember that we are the sons of a brave man, and should die as becomes his sons; I will be the first to receive the stroke of the headsman.” The land which hath produced a child so brave and noble, will also, under favourable circumstances, be fruitful of brave and noble men; and in proportion as her sons become generous and humane, they will also increase in valour and dignity. The little Samar, then, of my

play is what the son of the first Adigar would have been in his place, and as such I commend him to your favour and attention.

The views which I have given of the religion of Juan De Creda are true to all that you will find in the history and precepts of Jesus Christ, whenever you are inclined to read those books of our sacred Scripture which we call the Gospels, containing his history and written by men who were his immediate followers and disciples, being eye and ear witnesses of all that they relate; and let no peculiar opinions or creeds of different classes of Christians ever interfere with what you there perceive plainly and generally taught. It was given for the instruction of the simple and unlearned; as such receive it.

Wishing you all prosperity as a brave and virtuous people,—for brave ye are, and virtuous I hope ye will become,—I bid you farewell!

THE BRIDE.

THE BRIDE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Scene before the Castle of Rasinga.

*Enter Ehleypoolie meeting Mihdoony and two
Officers of the Chieftain's household.*

EHLEYPOLIE.

Well met, my comrades ! I have words for you.

MIHDOONY.

We doubt it not ; thou'rt bountiful in words.

FIRST OFFICER.

Thou never wast a niggard of such treasure.

EHLEYPPOOLIE.

Ay, but the words which ye shall now receive,
Are not the passing ware of daily traffic,
But such as in each list'ner's fancy wakes
Responding sounds, such as from twisted shell
On sea-beach found, comes to the bending ear
Of wand'ring child; sounds strange and full of
omen.

MIHDOONY.

What, evil omen? storms and hurricanes?

EHLEYPPOOLIE.

Fy on't! A stirring, tinkling, hopeful sound:
The ring of scatter'd largess, sweeter far
Than pipe or chord or chaunt of forest birds:
The sound of mummery and merriment:
The sound——

But wherefore stare ye on me thus?

List; I will tell ye what concerns us all.

MIHDOONY.

Out with it then! for it concerns us all
To be no more tormented with thy folly.

EHLEYPPOOLIE.

Our Lord Rasinga wills, that we brave mates,

With fifty armed followers and *their* followers,
Shall be in readiness by early dawn,
To march in goodly order to the mountains.

FIRST OFFICER.

I like not mountain warfare.

SECOND OFFICER.

No, nor I.

MIHDOONY.

To force our toilsome way through thick rank
woods,
With bleeding limbs drained by a hundred
leeches!

EHLEYPPOOLIE.

Fy, lazy cowards! shrink ye from adventures
Which gentle lady, in her palanquin,
Will share with you?

MIHDOONY.

A gentle lady, say'st thou?

EHLEYPPOOLIE.

Yes, ye dull dolts, I say so.—Brave Rasinga
Has with one wife, for a good term of years,
(Lulled by some charm of sorcery) been satisfied.
It is good time that he, like other chiefs,

Should have a first sultana and a second,
Or any such arrangement as becomes
His age and dignity. So, in gay trim
With our arm'd band, we by to-morrow's dawn
Must be in readiness.—These are your orders,
Sent by our lord through me.

MIHDOONY.

Who is this honoured lady of the mountains?

EHLEYPOLIE.

Canst thou not guess?—The aged chieftain's
daughter,

Whose petty hold was sack'd by daring robbers
Not many weeks gone by. He and his daughter
Were dragg'd as prisoners from their ruin'd home.
In this sad plight, our chief with Samarkoon,
The valiant brother of his present wife,
And a good strength of spearmen, met them;
charged

The bootied spoilers, conquer'd and released
Their wretched prey.—And ye may well suppose
The lady's veil, amidst the strange confusion,
Could not be clutched so close, but that Rasinga
Might see the lovely face it should have covered.

MIHDOONY.

O now I understand it ; for, methinks,
Rasinga had not else brought to his house
Another bride to share it with Artina.

*[Samarkoon who has entered behind them
unperceived, and overheard part of the
preceding dialogue, now rushes forward
indignantly.]*

SAMARKOON.

Ye foul-tongued knaves, who so belie your
master !

What words are these which ye have dared to
utter ?

EHLEYPPOOLIE.

My lord, I crave your pardon ; I have uttered
The orders which Rasinga charged me with,
That these *(pointing to Mihdoony and Officers)*
should straight prepare an armed band
To take their way to-morrow for the mountains.

SAMARKOON.

To bring a bride from thence ? Speak out, I
charge thee,
Thou lying knave ! Went not thy words thus far ?

EHLEYPPOOLIE.

If they be true or lying words, I wot not.
What may within a guarded palanquin
Be from the mountains brought, I may but guess.
Perhaps some speaking bird or jabb'ring ape.

SAMARKOON. (*striking him.*)

Take that—and that—thou false audacious slave :
Dar'st thou to answer me with mockery ?

[*Exit Ehleypoolie sulkily, followed by Mihdoony
and Officers : Manet Samarkoon.*]

Base sordid reptiles ! for some paltry largess,
And passing revelry, they would right gladly
See peace and order and domestic bliss
To misery and wild confusion changed.
Hateful suggestions ! base and vague conjectures
Which vulgar minds on slight foundation rear !
All false !——

And yet they are upon my heart
Like the compressure of a coiled boa,
Loathly but irresistible.

A bride !

It cannot be !—Tho' her unveiled face
Was of surprising beauty—O how lovely !

Yet he bestowed on her but frigid praise
And still continued to repress my ardour,
Whene'er I spoke of the fair mountain maid,
With silent stern reserve.—Is this like love ?
It is not natural.

Ah ! but it is ;
It is too natural,—deep subtle nature.
How was my idiot soul so far beguiled
That I ne'er thought of this ?

Yes, yes, he loves her !
Loves her whom I so well—so dearly love,
That every female image but her own
Is from my heart effaced, like curling mists
That rising from the vale, cling for a while
To the tall cliff's brown breast, till the warm sun
Dissolves them utterly.—'Tis so ; even she
Whom I have thought of, dreamt of, talked of,—
ay,
And talked *to*, though in absence, as a thing
Present and conscious of my words, and living,
Like the pure air around me, every where.

(after a pause.)

And he must have this creature of perfection !

It shall not be, whatever else may be!
As there is blood and manhood in this body,
It shall not be!

And thou, my gentle sister,
Must thy long course of wedded love and honour
Come to such end!—Thy noble heart will break.
When love and friendly confidence are fled,
Thou art not form'd to sit within thy bower
Like a dress'd idol in its carv'd alcove,
A thing of silk and gems and cold repose:
Thy keen but generous nature——Shall it be?
I'll sooner to the trampling elephant
Lay down this mortal frame, than see thee
wrong'd. *(after a considerable pause.)*

Nay, nay! I am a madman in my rage.
The words of that base varlet may be false.
Good Montebesa shall resolve my doubts.
Her son confides to her his secret thoughts:
To her I'll go and be relieved from torment,
Or know the worst at once. *[Exit.*

SCENE II.

The Apartment of Montebesa.

Sabawatte is discovered at work and singing.

SONG.

The gliding fish that takes his play
In shady nook of streamlet cool,
Thinks not how waters pass away,
And summer dries the pool.

The bird beneath his leafy dome
Who trills his carol, loud and clear,
Thinks not how soon his verdant home
The lightning's breath may sear.

Shall I within my bridegroom's bower
With braids of budding roses twin'd,
Look forward to a coming hour
When he may prove unkind?

The bee reigns in his waxen cell,
The chieftain in his stately hold,
To-morrow's earthquake,—who can tell?
May both in ruin fold.

Enter Montebesa as the Song is concluded.

MONTEBESA.

Did I not hear thee singing, as I came,
The song my dear Artina loves to hear?

SABAWATTE.

Even so, good lady; many a time I sang it
When first I was attendant in her bower;
Ere, at your own desire, and for my honour,
She did resign me to your higher service.

MONTEBESA.

Sing it no more: alas! she thought not then
Of its contain'd allusions to a fate
Which now abides herself.

SABAWATTE.

No, not her fate ; you surely mean not so :
She is a happy wife, the only wife
Of brave Rasinga, honour'd and beloved.

MONTEBESA.

She was and is as yet his only wife.

SABAWATTE.

As yet his only wife ! and think you then
She will not so continue ?

MONTEBESA.

Sabawatte,

It grieves me much to tell thee what perforce
Must soon be known to all ; my son Rasinga
Hath set his heart upon a younger bride,
Perhaps a fairer too.

SABAWATTE. (*eagerly.*)

No ; not a fairer.

I'd peril life and limb upon the bet,
She is not half so fair, nor half so good.

MONTEBESA.

Be not so hasty.—Why dost thou regard it
As such a grievous thing ? She has already
Enjoyed his undivided love much longer

Than other dames have done with other lords,
And reason teaches she should now give place.

SABAWATTE.

Reason and cruelty sort ill together ;
A loorie haunting with a spotted pard.
Ah ! wo the day ! Why have you told me this ?

MONTEBESA.

Because I would upon your sadden'd brow
Print traces which may lead our poor Artina
To question thee ; and thou who art her friend
Canst by degrees, with gentle wise precaution,
Reveal to her what she must needs be told.

SABAWATTE.

I cannot : put not such a task on me,
I do implore your goodness !—No, I cannot.

MONTEBESA.

Hush, hush ! I hear the footsteps of a man,
But not Rasinga.—It is Samarkoon ;
I know his rapid tread.—Be wise ; be silent ;
For he a while must live in ignorance.

Enter Samarkoon, and Sabawatte retires to some distance.

A happy morning to you, my youthful kinsman !

SAMARKOON.

As it may prove, good lady : happy morning
Oft leads to woeful eve, ay, woeful noon.

MONTEBESA.

These are strange sombre words ; what is the
matter ?

Why dost thou look both sorrowful and stern ?

SAMARKOON.

I have good cause, if that which I have heard
Be aught but a malignant, hateful tale,
On mere conjecture founded. Answer me
If thou know'st nothing of a num'rous train
In preparation, by Rasinga's orders,
To fetch home to his house a fair young bride ?
There's no such thing.—Speak—speak ! I will
believe thee ;

For if to thee unknown, there's no such thing.—

[A pause, he looking inquisitively in her face.]

Thou dost not speak ; thou dost not answer me ;
There's trouble in thine eye.—A with'ring curse
Light on his heartless heart, if this be true !

MONTEBESA.

Brave Samarkoon ! thou art not wise so fiercely
To question me of that which well may be
Without my knowledge ;—that which, if it be,
Nor thou nor I have any power to alter.

SAMARKOON.

Which *if* it be ! that *if* betrays an answer ;
A shameful answer, shunning open words.
Dear, dear Artina ! thou hast climbed already
The sunny side of Doombra's mountain ridge,
And now with one short step must pass the bounds
Dividing ardent heat from chilling clouds
With drenching mist surcharged.

So suddenly
To bring this change upon her ! Cruel craft !
He knows that it will break her tender heart,
And serve his fatal purpose.

MONTEBESA.

Frantic man !
Thou art unjust, ungenerous, unwise ;

For should Rasinga—no uncommon act,
Take to his princely bower a second bride,
Would not Artina still be held in honour,
Her children cherished and their rank secured?

SAMARKOON.

Such honour as unfeeling worldlings give
To fall'n deserted merit, she will have ;
And such security as should-be heirs,
Who stand i' th' way of younger, petted minions,
Find in the house of an estranged sire,
Her children will receive.—Alas, alas !
The very bonds of soul-devoted love
That did so long entwine a husband's heart,
For her own life the cord of execution
Will surely prove.—Detested cruelty !
But *is* it so? My head is all confusion,
My heart all fire;—I know not what thou said'st.

MONTEBESA.

Indeed, young kinsman, thou art now unfit
To hold discourse on such a wayward subject.
She whom thou lov'st so dearly as a brother,
I as a mother do most truly love.
Let this suffice thee, and retire a while,

For I expect Artina, and 'tis meet
She be not now overwhelm'd with thy distress.
Ha! she is here already; tripping lightly
With sparkling eyes, like any happy child,
Who bears away the new-robb'd rock-bird's spoil.

*Enter Artina, gayly, with an embroidered scarf
of many colours in her hand, and running up
to Montebesa.*

ARTINA.

Dear mother, look at this! such tints, such flowers?
The spirits of the Peak have done this work;
Not hands of flesh and blood.—Nay, look more
closely.

And thou too, Samarkoon. How cam'st thou
here?

I pray you both admire the beauteous gift—
Rasinga's gift—which I have just received.

SAMARKOON. (*eagerly.*)

Received from his own hand, so lately too?

ARTINA.

Ev'n now. But did I say from his own hand?

He sent it to me, the capricious man !
Ay, and another present, some days since,
Was also sent.—Ay, so it was indeed.

SAMARKOON.

Was he not wont to bring such gifts himself?

ARTINA.

With what a face of gravity thou ask'st
This most important question !—Never mind :
I can devise a means to be revenged,
For all this seeming lack of courtesy.

MONTEBESA.

Devise a means to be revenged ! and how ?

ARTINA.

I'll dress old nurse, as my ambassadress,
With robe and veil and pall majestic,
And she shall thank him in a tiresome speech,
(He hates her formal prösing)—that I trow,
Will cure him of such princely modes of sending
His gifts to me.—But ye are wond'rous grave.
What ails thee, brother ? Speak, good Montebesa ;
I fear he is not well.

MONTEBESA.

He is not very well.

ARTINA. (*taking his hand affectionately.*)

Indeed he is not.

SAMARKOON. (*turning away his face.*)

A passing fit of fever has disturbed me,

But mind it not, Artina.

ARTINA.

Nay, nay, but I *will* mind it, gentle brother.

And I have learnt this morning cheering news,—

Good news for thee and all sick folk beside.

MONTEBESA.

We want good news; what is it thou hast heard?

ARTINA.

De Creda, who, by physic magical,

Did cure Rasinga of his fearful malady,

When at the point of death, is just arrived.

Where he hath been these two long years and more

There's not a creature knows. Perhaps i' the

moon,

If magic knows the way to climb so high.

MONTEBESA.

Perhaps in his own land.

ARTINA.

Ay, certes, Europe is a wond'rous kingdom,

And well worth visiting, which sends forth men
So gifted and so good.

SAMARKOON.

I pray thee say not *men*, but only *man*.
Hath it e'er sent another like to him?
Yet wherefore came he to these happier regions
With such a wicked crew?

ARTINA.

Nay, blame him not:
His fate hath been disasterous and sad,
As I have heard him say; and woe is me!
Misfortune is not dainty in associates.

SAMARKOON.

Associates! Solitude in trackless deserts,
Where locusts, ants, and lizards poorly thrive,—
On the bare summit of a rugged peak,
Where birds of prey in dusky circles wing
The troubled air with loud and clam'rous din,
Were to an honest heart endurable,
Rather than such associates.

ARTINA.

Ha! does this rouse thee so? Yet, ne'ertheless,
I'll send for him, and he will make thee well.

SAMARKOON.

I'm well if thou art so, my gentle sister.

ARTINA.

And I *am* so; how canst thou doubt it, brother,
Being so loving and so well beloved.

SAMARKOON.

O yes! thou art indeed beloved most dearly,
Both thee and thine, and so shall ever be
Whilst life gives motion to thy brother's heart.

ARTINA.

A brother's heart!—How so? there is a meaning,—
A meaning and a mystery in this.

Tears too are on my hand, dropt from thine
eyes;—

O speak and tell the worst!

SAMARKOON.

I may not now.

I pray thee let me go; I cannot speak.

*[Breaks from her and exit. Then Sabawatte
comes forward and takes hold of her robe
with an action of soothing tenderness.]*

ARTINA. (to Sabawatte.)

Dost thou too look on me with pity?—Speak,

I charge thee speak, and tell the fearful cause,
Since no one else will do it.

MONTEBESA.

My dear Artina, thou shalt know the truth,
Which can no longer be conceal'd; but listen,
Listen with patience to the previous story,
And thou wilt see how fated, strange events,
Have caused within Rasinga's noble heart,
Ev'n he who has so long and dearly loved thee,
A growing possibility of change.

ARTINA.

If he is changed, why should I know the rest?
All is comprised in this. [*With actions of despair.*]

MONTEBESA.

Nay, do not wring thy hands, but listen to me.
Sit on this seat and call up strength to hear me.
Thou giv'st no heed to me; thou dost not hear.

ARTINA. (*in a low voice after a pause.*)

I'm faint and very cold; mine ears ring strangely;
But I will try to do whate'er thou wilt.

(*after another pause.*)

There is a story then: I'll hear it now.

MONTEBESA.

Rasinga, as thou know'st, did, short while since,
A mountain chief and his fair daughter rescue
From ruffian robbers. In its youthful charms
He saw the virgin's unveil'd face. Alas!
A sight so rare he could not see unmoved.
Restless and troubled, like a stricken wretch
Whom sorcery possesses, for a while
He strove against his passion, but at length
Nature gave way; and thou may'st guess what
follows.

ARTINA.

What follows!—What has followed?

MONTEBESA.

Our gates must soon receive this youthful bride;
And thou, dear daughter, must prepare thyself
To bear some natural change.

*[Artina faints away in the arms
of Sabawatte.]*

SABAWATTE.

I knew it would be so! Oh, my dear mistress!
These cruel words have dealt the fatal blow.

MONTEBESA.

Be not afraid of this infirmity,
Which, though it seems appalling, brings relief,
Ev'n like Niwané, when the virtuous soul
Hath run, through many a change, its troubled
course.

Let us remove her gently to my couch.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

The Apartments of Rasinga.

*He enters, followed by Ehleypoolie and Mihdoony,
and is speaking as he enters.*

RASINGA. (to Ehleypoolie.)

'Thou hast done well.

EHLEYPOLIE.

I am not given to boasting,
Yet I must say all things are so arranged,

That never bride's array, on such short notice,
Was better order'd, or for gallant show,
Or for security.

RASINGA.

Tis rich and splendid?

EHLEYPPOOLIE.

Our palanquin, with all its colour'd streamers,
Will shine above the guard's encircling heads,
Like any crested mancka, proudly perch'd
Upon the summit of her bushy knoll.

RASINGA.

And have ye pioneers to clear its way?

EHLEYPPOOLIE.

Ay, pioneers, who through a tangled thicket
Make room as quickly as the supple trunk
Of a wild elephant; whilst forest birds
From their rent haunts dislodged, fly up and wheel
In mazy circles, raising clam'rous cries,
And casting noon-day shadows, like a cloud,
On the green woods beneath.

MIHDOONY.

In truth, my lord, he makes it well appear
He is not given to boasting.

RASINGA. (*smiling.*)

Not a whit !

As meek and modest as a Padur's child.
And having done so much for show and speed,
Good Ehleypoolie, I will take for granted
The chiefest point of all, *security*,
Has not been overlook'd ; for mountain robbers
May yet be lurking near some narrow pass.

EHLEYPPOOLIE.

Well, let them lurk and burst upon us too ;
'Twill be as though a troop of mowing monkeys,
With antic mimic motions of defiance,
Should front the brinded tiger and his brood ;
Full soon, I trow, their hinder parts are seen
Lank and unseemly, to the en'my turn'd,
In scamp'ring haste, to gain the nearest shelter.
It were good sport if they should dare to face us.

MIHDOONY.

You see, my lord, he is in all things perfect.

RASINGA.

I see it plainly. Thanks for all thy pains,
Brave Ehleypoolie.

EHLEYPPOOLIE.

Shall we take with us
The pipes and doulas* which have hung so long
In the recess of Dame Artina's garden?
Of all your instruments there are not any
That sound so loud and clear.

RASINGA. (*sternly.*)

No, no! I charge thee,
Let nothing there be changed. Thy witless words
Have struck upon my heart a dismal note,
Depressing all its life and buoyancy.
Alas! my joy is like the shimm'ring brightness
Of moving waves, touch'd by the half-risen moon,
Tracing her narrow pathway on the deep :
Between each brighten'd ridge black darkness lies,
Whilst far on either side, the wat'ry waste
Spreads dim, and vague, and cheerless.

MIHDOONY.

If such thy thoughts, dost thou repent thy purpose?

* Doulas, a kind of drums, beat on one end by the hand and on the other with a stick.

RASINGA.

Not so ; there's extacy in those bright gleams ;
Ay, and though cross'd with darkness black as
midnight,
I will enjoy this momentary radiance.

Enter a Slave in haste.

What brings thee here with such a staring face ?

SLAVE.

The lady's coming ; she is close at hand.

RASINGA.

Ha ! from her father's house, unsent for, come ?

SLAVE.

No, not that lady, sir, it is Artina.

RASINGA. (*much disturbed.*)

I thought my mother would have spared me this.
Is Montebesa with her ?

SLAVE.

No, my lord.

She has her children with her.

RASINGA.

Wretched moment !

The sight of them will change my strength to
cowardice :

What shall I do ?

EHLEYPPOOLIE.

I'll quickly run and say that you are busy,
And cannot see her.

RASINGA.

(pulling Ehleypoolie back as he is about to go out.)
Restrain thy heartless zeal ; it is most odious.
Shall she be so debarr'd from entrance here,
Whose presence was a blessing and a grace !

Enter Artina, leading her youngest Child, and followed by Samar, leading his little Sister. Rasinga hastens to meet her, and leads her in silence to the principal seat, at the same time motioning to Ehleypoolie and Mihdoony to withdraw, who immediately leave the apartment.

Here take this seat, Artina.

ARTINA.

No, my lord ;
I come not here to sit ; I come to kneel,

As now beseems a scorn'd forsaken wife,
Who pleads with strong affection for her children ;
Who pleads in painful memory of love
Which thou for many years hast lavished on her,
Till, in the gladness of a foolish heart,
She did believe that she was worthy of it.

RASINGA.

Yes, dear Artina, thou wert worthy of it ;
Thou wert and art, and shalt be loved and honour'd
While there is life within Rasinga's bosom.
Why didst thou think it could be otherwise,
Although another mate within my house
May take her place to be with thee associated,
As younger sister with an elder-born ?
Such union is in many houses found.

ARTINA.

I have no skill in words, no power to reason :
How others live I little care to know :
But this I feel, there is no life for me,
No love, no honour, if thy alter'd heart
Hath put me from it for another mate.
Oh woe is me ! these children on thy knees
That were so oft caress'd, so dearly cherish'd,

Must then divide thy love with younger fav'rites,
Of younger mother born? Alas! alas!
Small will the portion be that falls to them.

RASINGA.

Nay, say not so, Artina; say not so.

ARTINA.

I know it well. Thou thinkest now, belike,
That thou wilt love them still; but ah! too soon
They'll be as things who do but haunt thy house,
Lacking another home, uncheer'd, uncared for.
And who will heed their wants, will soothe their
sorrow,

When their poor mother moulders in the grave,
And her vex'd spirit, in some other form,
Is on its way to gain the dreamless sleep.
Kneel, Samar, kneel! thy father lov'd thee first,
In our first happy days.—Wilt thou not, boy?
Why dost thou stand so sullen and so still?

SAMAR.

He loves us not.

ARTINA.

Nay, nay, but he will love us.
Down on thy knees! up with thy clasped hands!

Rasinga, O Rasinga ! did I think
So to implore thy pity—me and mine
So to implore thy pity, and in vain !

[Sinks on the ground exhausted with agitation.]

RASINGA. *(raising her gently in his arms.)*

Dearest Artina ! still most dear to me ;
Thy passionate affections waste thy strength ;
Let me support thee to another chamber,
More fitting for retirement and for rest.
Come also, children.—Come, my little playmates !

SAMAR.

We're not thy playmates now.

RASINGA.

What dost thou say ?

SAMAR.

Thou dost not speak and smile and sport with us
As thou wert wont : we're not thy playmates now.

RASINGA.

Thou art a fearless knave to tell me so.

*[Exeunt Artina leaning on her husband and
the children following.]*

SCENE IV.

A retired Grove near the Castle of Rasinga.

Enter Samarkoon and a Forest Freebooter.

SAMARKOON.

Now stop we here ; in this sequestered spot,
We may with freedom commune on the purpose
For which I would engage thy speedy aid.
Thou knowest who I am ; and dost remember
Where, how, and when I last encounter'd thee ?

FREEBOOTER.

I do, my lord ; but though thou find'st me thus,
Alone and slightly arm'd, be well assured
I will defend my life and liberty,
Against thyself (*looking suspiciously round*) or any
ambush'd band
To the last bloody push of desperation.

SAMARKOON.

I know thou wilt ; it is thy desp'rate prowess
Which makes me now, all robber as thou art,
And lurking here disguised, as well I guess,
For no good end,—to seek thy amity.

FREEBOOTER.

My amity ! the noble Samarkoon—
A chief of rank, and brother of Rasinga !

SAMARKOON.

Strong passion by strong provocation roused
Is not a scrup'lous chuser of its means.
How many of these armed desperadoes,
From whose fell hands we did so lately rescue
That petty chieftain and his child, could'st thou
Within short time assemble ?

FREEBOOTER.

Few remain

Of those who once, at call of my shrill horn,
With spear and bow in hand, and quiver'd back
The deadly arrows bearing, issued forth
From cave or woody jungle, fierce but stealthy,
Like glaring, tawny pards,—few, few remain.

SAMARKOON.

But some remain?

FREEBOOTER.

Ay, some.

SAMARKOON.

And they are brave?

FREEBOOTER.

No braver bandits e'er in deadly strife
With man or tiger grappled.

SAMARKOON.

Enough, hie quickly to thy forest haunts,
And near the narrow pass where ye sustain'd
The onset of Rasinga, wait my coming
With all the armed mates thou canst assemble,
And there I'll join thee with a trusty band.
Do this, and thou shalt be rewarded richly.

FREEBOOTER.

I will; nor do I doubt the recompense
From such a noble chief will be most bountiful.

SAMARKOON.

Tis well; be speedy, secret, faithful,—brave
I need not say. So let us separate,
Nor stay for further parley; time is precious.

FREEBOOTER.

I will but go to leave an offering
At the Wiharé yonder, then with speed
Wend to our woods.—But wherefore smilest thou ?

SAMARKOON.

Dost thou regard such duties ?

FREEBOOTER.

Ay, good sooth !
Who has more need of favour from the gods
Than he who leads a life of lawless peril ?

[*Exit.*SAMARKOON. (*exultingly.*)

Ay, now, Rasinga, set thy costly chamber,
While poor Artina sighs and weeps unheeded,
In gallant order for thy fair new bride !
Another bridegroom and another chamber
Abide her which thou little thinkest of.

[*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

*The Castle of Samarkoon. Loud shouting heard
without.*

Enter several Domestics in confusion.

FIRST DOMESTIC.

What shouts are those? do enemies approach?

What can we do in our brave master's absence?

SECOND DOMESTIC.

Ha! hear it now! it is no enemy;

It is our lord himself ; I know the sound.
And lo ! his messenger arrived with tidings.

(Enter a Messenger.)

What are thy news ?

MESSENGER.

Right joyful news, I warrant.
Our master brings a bride, by conquest won,
To be the bliss and sunshine of his house ;
A bride fair as the goddess, bright Patiné.

FIRST DOMESTIC.

Most unexpected tidings ! Won by conquest ?

SECOND DOMESTIC.

With whom has he been fighting for such prize ?

MESSENGER.

Fy, fy ! despatch and make such preparation
As may be fitting for a bride's reception :
There is no time for telling stories now.
Despatch, I say ; do ye not hear them nearer ?
They are not many furlongs from the gate.

[Exeunt in haste different ways.]

SCENE II.

The Hall or principal Room of the Castle.

Enter Samarkoon leading in a Lady covered with a veil, and followed by two Female Attendants ; then a band of Musicians and a train of armed Men with Ehleypoolie and several of his Soldiers as prisoners. A Nuptial Chaunt or Song is struck up.

SONG.

Open wide the frontal gate,
The lady comes in bridal state ;
Than wafted spices sweeter far,
Brighter than the morning star ;
Modest as the lily wild,
Gentle as a nurse's child.
A lovelier prize of prouder boast,
Never chieftain's threshold crost.

Like the beams of early day,
Her eyes' quick flashes brightly play ;
Brightly play and gladden all
On whom their kindly glances fall.
Her lips in smiling weave a charm
To keep the peopled house from harm.
In happy moment is she come
To bless a noble chieftain's home.

Happy be her dwelling here,
Many a day and month and year !
Happy as the nested dove
In her fruitful ark of love !
Happy in her tented screen !
Happy in her garden green !
Thus we welcome one and all,
Our lady to her chieftain's hall.

SAMARKOON.

I give ye all large thanks, my valiant warriors,
For the good service ye have done to me
Upon this day of happy fate. Ere long,
This gentle lady too, I trust, will thank you,

Albeit her present tears and alter'd state
Have made her shrink and droop in cheerless
 silence.

An ample recompense ye well have won,
Which shall not with a sparing hand be dealt.
Meantime, partake our cheer and revelry ;
And let the wounded have attendance due ;
Let sorcery and med'cine do their best
To mitigate their pain. [*Turning to the Prisoners.*

 Nay, Ehleypoolie,
Why from beneath those low'ring brows dost thou
Cast on the ground such wan and wither'd looks ?
Thy martial enterprise fell somewhat short
Of thy predictions and thy master's pleasure ;
But thou and all thy band have bravely fought,
And no disgrace is coupled with your failure.

 EHLEYPPOOLIE.

Had not my amulets from this right arm
Been at the onset torn, ev'n ambush'd foes
Had not so master'd us.

 SAMARKOON.

Well, be it so ; good amulets hereafter
Thou may'st secure, and fight with better luck.

EHLEYPOLIE.

Ay, luck was on your side, good sooth ! such luck
As fiends and magic give. Another time——

SAMARKOON.

What thou wilt do another time, at present
We have no time to learn.

(to his followers generally.)

Go where cool sparkling cups and sav'ry viands
Will wasted strength recruit, and cheer your hearts.
Ere long I'll join you at the board, and fill
A hearty cup of health and thanks to all.

*[Exeunt all but Samarkoon, the Bride, and
her Female Attendants.]*

And now, dear maid, thou pearl and gem of beauty,
The prize for which this bloody fray was fought,
Wilt thou forgive a youthful lover's boldness,
And the rude outrage by his love committed ?
Wilt thou not speak to me ?

BRIDE.

What can I say ?

I was the destined bride of great Rasinga ;
My father told me so.

SAMARKOON.

But did thy heart—
Did thine own heart, sweet maid, repeat the tale?
And did it say to thee, “the elder chieftain
Is he whom I approve; his younger rival
Unworthy of my choice?”

BRIDE.

My choice! a modest virgin hath no choice.
That I have seen you both; that both have seen
My unveil'd face, alas! is my dishonour,
Albeit most innocent of such exposure.

SAMARKOON.

Say not dishonour; innocence is honour,
And thou art innocent and therefore honourable,
Though every slave and spearman of our train
Had gaz'd upon thy face. The morning star
Receives no taint for that a thousand eyes,
All heaven-ward turn'd, admire its lovely brightness.
Let me again look in thy dark soft eyes,
And read my pardon in one beamy smile.

*[Attempting to draw aside her veil while
she gathers it the closer.]*

BRIDE.

Forbear, forbear ! this is indignity.

SAMARKOON.

And this, dear maid, is childish bashfulness.

*[The upper fastening of the veil gives way
and falls over her hand.]*

And look, the silly fence drops of itself ;

An omen of good fortune to my love.

Oh ! while those eyes are fixed upon the ground,

Defended from too ardent admiration,

With patience hear my suit.—Two rival chiefs

Have look'd upon thy face, and thou perforce

Must chuse or one or other for thy husband.

Rasinga in his rich and noble mansion,

Hath years already pass'd in wedded love ;

And is the husband of a virtuous dame,

Whose faithful heart, in giving place to thee,

Will be asunder torn. My house is humble ;

No gay and costly treasures deck its walls ;

But I am young, unmarried, and my heart

Shall be thine own, whilst thou reign'st mistress
here,

As shares the lion's mate his forest cave,

In proud equality.—Thou smilest at this ;
And it doth please thy fancy ;—yea, a tear
Falls on that smiling cheek ; yes, thou art mine.

BRIDE.

Too quickly dost thou scan a passing thought.

SAMARKOON.

Thanks, thanks ! O take my thanks for such dear
words !

And speak them yet again with that sweet voice
Which makes my heart dance in its glowing cell.

FIRST ATTENDANT. (*advancing to Samarkoon.*)

My lady is far spent with all this coil ;
She has much need of quiet repose. I pray,
On her behalf, let this be granted to her.

BRIDE. (*to First Attendant.*)

I thank thee nurse ! (*to Samarkoon*) My lord, I
would retire.

SAMARKOON.

I will retire, or do whate'er thou wilt.
Thy word or wish commands myself and mine.

[*Exit.*

FIRST ATTENDANT.

Thyself and thine ! a mighty rich dominion !

Alack, alackaday, the woeful change !
This rude unfurnish'd tower for the fair mansion
Of great Rasinga ! Evil was the hour
When those fell demons stopped us on our way.

BRIDE.

O say not so ! in great Rasinga's house
A noble wife already holds her state,
And here I shall have no divided pleasure.

FIRST ATTENDANT.

Divided ! Doth an elder faded wife
In love, in honour, or in riches share
Like portion with a youthful beauty ? No !
She doth herself become the flatt'ring subject
Of her through whom the husband's favours flow ;
And thereby doth increase her rival's power,
Her state and dignity.

Thou art a simple child, and hast no sense
Of happiness or honour. Woe the day
When those fell demons stopp'd our high career !

BRIDE.

But for my father's anger, and the blood
Which has been shed in this untoward fray,

The day were one of joy and not of woe,
In my poor estimation.

FIRST ATTENDANT.

Poor, indeed!

SECOND ATTENDANT. (*advancing.*)

Fy, nurse! how canst thou so forget thyself?
Thy words are rude; my lady is offended.

FIRST ATTENDANT.

Who would not, so provok'd, forget herself?
Ah! the rich treasures of Rasinga's palace!
His gaudy slaves, his splendid palanquins!
They have pass'd from us like a mummer's show,
Seen for an hour and gone.

Enter a Female Domestic.

DOMESTIC.

My master bids me say, the lady's chamber
Is now in readiness.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

The Court of the Castle.

Enter Two Domestics, meeting.

FIRST DOMESTIC.

The merry revelry continues still
As if but just begun, though Samarkoon
Reminds them anxiously, that preparation
For the defence of this neglected hold,
Is pressing matter of necessity.

SECOND DOMESTIC.

Those glutton bandits will not leave a board,
On which good viands smoke or wine cups sparkle,
For all the words of threat'ning or entreaty,
That mortal tongue can utter.

Enter a Third Domestic in great alarm.

THIRD DOMESTIC.

Where is our master?

FIRST DOMESTIC.

What alarms thee so?

THIRD DOMESTIC.

There is a power of armed men advancing.
I saw their dark heads winding through the pass,
Above the bushes shown; a lengthen'd line,
Two hundred strong, I guess.

FIRST DOMESTIC.

It is Rasinga.

SECOND DOMESTIC.

Ring the larum bell,
And rouse those drunken thieves from their debauch.

THIRD DOMESTIC.

But I must find our master; where is he?

FIRST DOMESTIC.

He was i' th' inner court some minutes since.

*[The larum bell is rung, and many people in
confusion cross the stage as the scene closes.]*

SCENE IV.

*An open space before the gate of the Castle ;
armed men are discovered on the walls.*

Enter Rasinga and his Force.

RASINGA. *(to those on the walls.)*

Where is that villain whom ye call your lord ?

Let him appear, and say, why like a robber,—

A reckless, lawless traitor, he hath dared

My servants to attack, my bride to capture,

And do most foul dishonour to my state.

Am I a driv'ling fool,—a nerveless stripling,—

A widow'd ranny, propping infant's rights,

That thus he reckons with impunity

To pour on me such outrage ?

*Enter Samarkoon above, and stands on the wall over
the gate.*

SAMARKOON.

Rasinga, thou art robb'd and thou art wrong'd,
And hast good cause to utter stormy words.

RASINGA.

Ay, and good cause to back those stormy words
With stormy blows which soon shall force that
gate,

Make desp'rate entrance through the rifted walls,
And leave within your paltry tower of all
Who dare oppose my arms, no living thing,
Unless thou do restore the mountain beauty,
And all the spoil thou hast so basely won.

SAMARKOON.

Though I have dared to wrong thee, brave Rasinga,
I've done it in the heat and agony
Of passions that within a generous breast
Are irresistible, and, be assured,
With no weak calculations of impunity.

The living treasure I have robb'd thee of,
I will defend to the extremity
Of desp'rate effort, ev'n in this poor hold,
Mann'd as it is.—I well might speak to thee
Of equal claims to that fair beauty's favour ;
Of secret love ; of strong fraternal sympathy
With her whose honour'd name I will not utter,
But that were vain.

RASINGA.

Vain as a sea-bird's screams,
To check the wind-scourged ocean's rising billows :
So far thou speakest wisely.—Stern defiance
I cast to thee ; receive it as thou may'st,
Audacious traitor !

SAMARKOON.

And I to thee do cast it back again
With words and heart as dauntless as thine own.

RASINGA. (*to his followers.*)

Here ends our waste of breath and waste of time.
On, pioneers, and let your pond'rous mallets
Break down the gate. To it, my valiant bow-
men !

Discharge a shower of arrows on that wall,
And clear it of yon load of miscreant life.

[Rasinga's followers raise a shout which is answered by one equally loud from the adverse party, and the attack commences. After great efforts of attack and defence, the gate is at last forced, and Rasinga with his force enters the Castle. The Scene then closes.]

SCENE V.

A wild Mountain Pass, with a bridge swung from one high perpendicular rock to another. The course of a small stream, with its herby margin, seen beneath. Martial music is heard, and a military procession seen at some distance, winding among the rocks and at length crossing the bridge. Then come the followers of Rasinga in triumph, leading Samarkoon in chains, followed by men bearing a palanquin, and in the rear Rasinga himself, with his principal officers. As he is on the middle of the bridge Juan de Creda enters below, and calls to him with a loud voice.

JUAN.

Rasinga, ho ! thou noble chief, Rasinga !

RASINGA. (*above.*)

Who calls on me ?

JUAN.

Dost thou not know my voice ?

RASINGA.

Juan de Creda, is it thou indeed ?

Why do I find thee here ?

JUAN.

Because the Power that rules o'er heaven and
earth

Hath laid its high commission on my soul,

Here to arrest thee on thy fatal way.

RASINGA.

What mean such solemn words ?

JUAN.

Descend to me and thou shalt know their meaning.

[*Rasinga crosses the bridge and re-appears below.*]

RASINGA.

I have obeyed thee, and do bid thee welcome

To this fair land again.—But thou shrink'st back,

Casting on me looks of upbraiding sorrow :

With thee I may not lordly rights assert ;

What is thy pleasure ?

JUAN.

Is he, the prisoner now led before thee,

Loaded with chains, like a vile criminal,
Is he the noble Samarkoon, thy brother?

RASINGA.

Miscall not by such names that fetter'd villain :
He, who once wore them with fair specious seeming,
Is now extinct to honour, base, and treacherous.
The vilest carcase, trampled under foot
Of pond'rous elephant, for lawless deeds,
Was ne'er inhabited by soul more worthless.

JUAN.

Thy bitter wrath ascribes to his offence
A ten-fold turpitude. Suspect thy judgment.
When two days thought has commun'd with thy
conscience,
Of all the strong temptations which beset
Unwary youth by potent passions urged,
Thou wilt not pass on him so harsh a censure.

RASINGA.

When two days thought ! If that he be alive,
And wear a human semblance two days hence,
In the fell serpent's folds, the tiger's paws,
Or earthquake's pitchy crevice, with like speed,
Be my abhorred end.

JUAN.

Hold, hold, Rasinga !

The God, in whose high keeping is the fate
Of every mortal man, or prince or slave,
Hath this behest declared, that sinful man
Should pardon grant to a repentant brother ;
Yea, more than this,—to his repentant enemies.
So God commands ; and wilt thou prove rebellious ?

RASINGA.

Ha ! hast thou been in heaven since last we met,
To bring from hence this precious message ? Truly
Thou speak'st as if thou had'st.

JUAN.

No, I have found it in my native land,
Within the pages of a sacred book
Which I and my compatriots do believe
Contains the high revealed will of God.

RASINGA.

Ha ! then those Europeans, whom the sea
Hath cast like fiends upon our eastern shores,
To wrong and spoil and steep the soil with blood,
Are not compatriots of thy book-taught land.
What ! dost thou cast thine eyes upon the ground ?

The stain of rushing blood is on thy cheek.
If they be so, methinks they have obeyed
That heavenly message sparingly.—Go to !
Tell me no more of this fantastic virtue,—
This mercy and forgiveness. Even a woman,
A child, a simpleton would laugh to scorn
Such strange unnatural duty.

JUAN.

Call it not so till I have told thee further——

[taking his hand.]

RASINGA.

Detain me not. But that to thee I owe
My life from fatal sickness rescued,—dearly,
Full dearly should'st thou pay for such pre-
sumption.

Let go thy hold.

JUAN.

I will not till thou promise,
Before thy vengeful purpose is effected,
To see me once again.

RASINGA.

I promise then, thou proud and dauntless
stranger ;

For benefits are traced in my remembrance
With lines as ineffaceable as wrongs.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

*The House of Montebesa ; who enters, meeting a
Servant, from the opposite side.*

MONTEBESA.

What com'st thou to impart ? thy busy face
Is full of mingled meaning, grief and gladness.

SERVANT.

My Lord Rasinga, madam, is returned,—
Return'd victorious ; and the fair young bride
Again is rescued by his matchless valour.

MONTEBESA.

All this is good ; hast thou no more to tell ?

SERVANT.

Alas ! I have ; for by his spearmen guarded,

Loaded with chains, most rueful to behold,
Comes Samarkoon. For now it doth appear,
That he, enleagued with robbers, was the spoiler,
Who beat the gallant train of Ehleypoolie,
And bore away their prize.

MONTEBESA.

Oh, this is dreadful! Clouds o'erlapping clouds
Are weaving o'er our house an evil woof,—
A fearful canopy. It was to us
That ominous sign was sent, but few days past,
When Boodhoo's rays, beneath the noon's blue
dome
With shiv'ring motion gleam'd in streaky bright-
ness,
Surpassing mid-day splendour. Woe is me!
I saw it not unmov'd; but little thought,
Ah! little thought of misery like this.

Enter Juan de Creda.

Welcome, De Creda; thou in hour of need
Art ever wise and helpful. Dost thou know
Of this most strange event? Of Samarkoon

As lawless spoiler by Rasinga conquer'd,
And led——

JUAN.

I do ; and come to entreat thee, lady,
That thou with thy enchain'd and vengeful son
May'st use a mother's influence to save him.

MONTEBESA.

Entreaties are not wanted, good De Creda,
For herein I am zealous as thyself.

JUAN.

He must not die.

MONTEBESA.

Nor shall, if I can save him.

JUAN.

Then let us meet Rasinga, as he passes,
Ere he can reach the shelter of his chamber,
Where men are wont to cherish moody wrath ;
And we will so beset him with our prayers,
That we shall move his soul, if it be possible.
The fair Artina too must come with us
To beg her brother's life.

MONTEBESA.

Yes, be it so ; but first let us apprise her,

And do it warily, lest sudden grief
O'erwhelm her totally.

JUAN.

That will be necessary.

And, lady, let us find her instantly ;

We have no time to spare. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII.

A Gallery or Passage leading to Rasinga's chamber.

*Enter Rasinga, speaking to an Officer who follows
him.*

RASINGA.

And let his dungeon be secured to the utmost
With bolt and bars ; and set a double guard
To watch the entry. Make it sure, I say ;

For if thy prisoner escape, thy life
Shall pay the forfeit. This thou knowest well,
Therefore be vigilant. [Exit officer.

The very blood is boiling in my veins,
Whilst the audacious braver of my rights,
My arms, my honour, ev'n within a dungeon
And manacled with iron, breathes vital air.

*Enter Montebesa by the farther end of the Gallery,
followed by Artina and Juan de Creda, who
remain without advancing further, whilst she
approaches her Son with an air of dignity.*

MONTEBESA.

Rasinga, let a mother, who rejoices
In every victory thy arms achieve,
Be it o'er foreign, yea, or kindred foe,
Greet thee right heartily.

RASINGA.

I thank you, lady.

MONTEBESA.

But that my pride in thee may be unmixed
With any sense of aught to taint thy glory,

Grant me a boon that will enhance thy triumph,
And make me say with full, elated heart,
Rasinga is my son.

RASINGA.

Name it ; 'whate'er a man may grant is thine.

MONTEBESA.

The life of Samarkoon ; that is my boon.

RASINGA.

The life of Samarkoon ! then thou dost ask
The foul disgrace and ruin of thy son.

MONTEBESA.

Not so ; for thine own peace and future weal,
I do adjure thee to be merciful.

RASINGA.

And would'st thou see the son whom thou did'st bear
An unreveng'd, despis'd, derided man ?
And have I got from thee and my brave sire
This manly stature and these hands of strength
To play an idiot's or a woman's part ?
If such indeed be Montebesa's wish,
Poor slight-bon'd, puny, shambling drivellers,
Or sickly maidens, should have been the offspring
Produced by her to mock a noble house.

MONTEBESA.

O say not so ! there will be no dishonour.

RASINGA.

What ! no dishonour in the mocking lips,
And pointing fingers of the meanest peasant,
Who would his whetted blade sheath in the heart
Of his own mother's son for half the wrong,—
Ay, half the wrong which that audacious traitor
Has done to me !—Cease, lady ; say no more :
I cannot henceforth live in ignominy,
Therefore, good sooth ! I cannot grant your boon.

ARTINA. (*rushing forward and catching hold of his
hand and his garments.*)

Dear, dear Rasinga ! wilt thou make my life
One load of wretchedness ? Thou'st cast me
off,—

I who so loved thee and love thee still,—
Thou'st cast me off and I will meekly bear it.
Then, wilt thou not make some amends to me
In a sav'd brother's life, for all the tears,
The bitter tears and anguish this has cost me ?

RASINGA. (*shaking her off.*)

Thy plea is also vain ; away, away !

Thy tears and anguish had been better comforted,
Had he a more successful spoiler proved.

[*Turning fiercely on Juan de Creda, who
now advances.*

Ha! thou too art upon me! Thou whose kindred
And colleagues are of those who read good lore,
And speak like holy saints, and act like fiends.
By my brave father's soul, where'er it be,
Thou art a seemly suitor for such favour!

[*Bursts away from them and exit.*

ARTINA.

De Creda, good De Creda, dear De Creda!
Wilt thou not follow him?

JUAN.

Not now; it were in vain; I might as well,
While wreck of unroof'd cots and forest boughs,
And sand and rooted herbage whirl aloft,
Dark'ning the sky, bid the outrageous hurricane
Spare a rock-crested palm.—But yet despair not;
I'll find a season. Let me lead thee hence.

MONTEBESA.

I fear the fierceness of his untam'd spirit
Will never yield until it be too late;

And then he will in brooding, vain repentance,
The more relentless be to future criminals;
As though the death of one he should have spared,
Made it injustice e'er to spare another.
I know his dangerous nature all too well.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII.

A Prison.

*Samarkoon is discovered in chains; a lamp burning
on the ground near him, and a pitcher of water by it.*

SAMARKOON.

And now the close of this my present being,
With all its hopes, its happiness and pain,
Is near at hand,—a violent bloody close,
Perhaps with added torture and disgrace.

Oh, Kattragam, terrific deity !
Thy stern decrees have compass'd all this misery.
Short, turbulent, and changeful, and disast'rous,
Hath been this stage of my existence. What,
When this is past, abides me in my progress
To the still blessing of unvision'd rest,
Who may imagine or conjecture ?—Blessing !
Alas ! it is a dull unjoyous blessing
To lose with consciousness of pain, all conscious-
ness:

The pleasure of sweet sounds and beauteous sights,
Bride, sister, friends,—all vanish'd and extinct,
That stilly, endless rest may be unbroken.

Oh, oh ! he is a miserable man,
Who covets such a blessing !—Hush, bad
thoughts !

Rebellious, faithless thoughts ! My misery
Is deep enough to make even this a blessing.

Enter Artina.

It cannot be ! is it some fantasy :
Who and what art thou ?

ARTINA. (*approaching him softly.*)

The thing I seem ; thy miserable sister.

SAMARKOON.

My gen'rous, loving sister, in her love
Running such fearful risk to comfort me.

ARTINA.

Nay, more than this, dear brother ; more than
comfort ;

I come to set thee free.

SAMARKOON.

Has he relented ?

ARTINA.

No, no ! Rasinga is most ruthless. I,
By means of this, (*showing a signet*) which, in
our better days,

It was my privilege to use at will,
Have pass'd the guards, and may a short while hence
By the same means return,—return in safety.
Meantime let me undo those galling fetters ;
I've brought fit tools, and thou shalt teach me how.

SAMARKOON.

But can'st thou think the guards will let thee pass,
Ev'n with thy signet, leading a companion ?

It cannot be ; thou dost deceive thyself,
Thy mis'ry and affection make thee foolish.

ARTINA.

Not so ; there is a secret passage yonder.
That stone (*pointing to it*) like many others in the
wall,
But rougher still ; (*goes close to the stone and
touches it*) look at it ! take good heed,
Has in its core a groove on which it turns :
A man's full strength will move it, and despair
Will make thee strong.

SAMARKOON.

Were two men's strength requir'd, I feel within
me
The means for such deliverance ; if, indeed,
Thou hast not been deceiv'd by some false tale.

ARTINA.

I'm not deceiv'd. But wait, when I am gone,
With limbs yet seemingly enthrall'd, until
The wary guard hath come to ascertain
Thy presence here ; and then, when he re-
tires,——

Thou know'st the rest.—Haste, let me loose thy shackles.

Is this the way ?

[Kneeling down and using her implements for breaking the chains, which she draws from the folds of her robe.]

SAMARKOON.

Well done, my most incomparable sister !
Affection seems to teach thee crafts-man's skill.

ARTINA.

This link is broken.

SAMARKOON.

So it is indeed.

If I am fated yet to live on earth,
A prosp'rous man, I'll have thy figure graven,
As now thou art, with implements in hand,
And make of it a tutelary idol.

ARTINA. *(still working at the chains.)*

Ha ! thou speak'st cheerly now ; and thy chang'd
voice

Is a good omen. Dost thou not remember
How once in play I bound thy stripling limbs

With braided reeds, as a mock criminal?
We little thought—Another link is conquer'd,
And one alone remains. [*Tries to unloose it.*

But it is stubborn.

Oh, if that I should now lack needed strength!
Vile, hateful link—give way!

*Enter Rasinga, and she starts up, letting fall her
tools on the ground.*

RASINGA.

And thou art here, thou most rebellious woman!
A faithful spy had given me notice of it,
And yet methought it was impossible
Thou could'st be so rebellious, so bereft
Of female honour, matronly allegiance.

ARTINA.

Upbraid me not, my lord; I've at your feet
Implor'd you to relent and spare his life,
The last shoot of my father's honour'd house.
But thou, with unrelenting tyranny,
Hast chid me from thee.—Matronly allegiance,
Even in a favour'd and beloved wife,

O'er-rules not every duty ; and to her,
Who is despis'd; abandon'd, and disgraced,
Can it be more imperious ? No, Rasinga ;
I were unmeet to wear a woman's form,
If, with the means to save my brother's life,
Not implicating thine, I had from fear
Of thy displeasure, grievous as it is,
Forborne to use them.

RASINGA.

Ha ! such bold words to justify the act,
Making rebellion virtue ! Such audacity
Calls for the punishment which law provides
For faithless and for disobedient wives.

SAMARKOON.

Rasinga, if that shameful threat be serious,
Thou art the fellest, fiercest, meanest tyrant
That e'er join'd human form to demon's spirit.

RASINGA.

And dost thou also front me with a storm
Of loud injurious clamour ?—Ho, without !

[*Calling aloud off the stage.*

I came not here to hold a wordy war
With criminals and women.—Ho ! I say.

Enter Guards.

Secure the prisoner, and fasten tightly
His unlock'd chains.—And, lady, come thou instantly
To such enthrallment as becomes thy crime.

[Exeunt Rasinga and Artina, who is led off by guards, while motioning her last farewell to Samarkoon. The scene closes.]

SCENE IX.

An Apartment in the House of Montebesa.

*Samar is discovered playing on the floor with toys,
and Sabawatte sitting by him.*

SAMAR. *(holding up a toy.)*

This is the prettiest plaything of them all:
I will not use it till my mother come,
That she may see it fresh and beautiful.

SABAWATTE.

Alas, sweet Samar! would that she were here!

SAMAR.

Will she not soon? how long she stays away!
And she has been so kind to me of late.

SABAWATTE.

Was she not always kind?

SAMAR.

Yes, always very kind, but since my father
Has thought of that new bride—I hate that bride—
And spoken to me seldom and with looks
Not like his wonted looks, she has been kinder;
Has kiss'd me oftener, and has held me closer
To her soft bosom. O she loves me dearly!
And dearly I love her!—Where is she now,
That thou should'st say, “ I would that she were
here!”

SABAWATTE.

Dear boy! I may not tell thee.

SAMAR.

May not tell me!
Then she is in some sad and hateful place,
And I will go to her.

SABAWATTE.

Ah no ! thou can'st not.

SAMAR.

I will ; what shall withhold me, Sabawatte ?

SABAWATTE.

Strong bolts and bars, dear child !

SAMAR.

Is she in prison ?

SABAWATTE.

She is.

SAMAR.

And who hath dared to put her there ?

SABAWATTE.

Thy father.

SAMAR.

Then he is a wicked man,

Most cruel and most wicked.

I'll stay no longer here ; I'll go to her ;

And if through bolts and bars I may not pass,

I at her door will live, as my poor dog

Close by my threshold lies and pines and moans

When he's shut out from me.—I needs must go ;

Rooms are too good for me when she's in prison.

Come, lead me to the place ; I charge thee do ;
I'll stay no longer here.

*Enter Montebesa, and he runs to her clasping her
knees, and bursting into tears.*

MONTEBESA.

What is the matter with thee, my dear child ?
(*to Sabawatte*) Does he know aught ?

SABAWATTE.

I could not keep it from him.

SAMAR.

I know it all ; I know it all, good grandame.
O take me to her ! take me to her prison.
I'll be with her ; I'll be and bide with her ;
No other place shall hold me.

MONTEBESA.

Be pacified, dear child ! be pacified,
And I myself will take thee to thy mother :
The guards will not refuse to let me pass.
Weep not so bitterly, my own dear Samar !
Fy ! wipe away those tears and come with me.

SABAWATTE.

A blessing on you, madam, for this goodness !
It had been cruelty to keep him here.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The Private Chamber of Rasinga, who is discovered walking backwards and forwards in great agitation.

RASINGA.

That I—that I alone must be restrained!
The very meanest chief who holds a mansion,
May therein take his pleasure with a second,
When that his earlier wife begins to fade,
Or that his wearied heart longs for another.
Ay, this may be ; but I am deem'd a slave,

A tam'd—a woman-bound—a simple fool.

(after a pause)

Nor did I seek for it ; fate was my tempter.

That face of beauty was by fate unveil'd ;

And I must needs forbear to look upon it,

Or looking, must forbear to love.—Bold traitor !

That he should also, in that very moment,

Catch the bright glimpse and dare to be my rival !

Fy, fy ! His jealous sister set him on.

Why is my mind so rack'd and rent with this ?

Jealous, rebellious, spiteful as she is

I need not, will not look upon her punishment.

Beneath the wat'ry gleam one moment's struggle,—

No more but this. *(tossing his arms in agony.)*

Oh, oh ! there was a time,

A time but shortly past, when such a thought

Had been—the cords of life had snapt asunder

At such a thought.—And it must come to this !

(after another perturbed pause)

It needs must be ; I'm driven to the brink.

What is a woman's life, or any life

That poisons his repose for whom it flourished ?

I would have cherish'd, honour'd her, yet she,
Rejecting all, has ev'n to this extremity
No, no! it is that hateful fiend her brother,
Who for his damn'd desires and my dishonour
Hath urged her on.—The blood from his shorn
trunk

Shall to mine eyes be as the gushing fount
To the parch'd pilgrim.—Blood! but that his rank
Forbids such execution, his marr'd carcase,
A trampled mass—a spectacle of horror,
Should——the detested traitor!

[*Noise at the door.*

Who is there?

JUAN DE CREDÁ. (*without.*)

Juan de Credá: pray undo thy door.

RASINGA.

No, not to thee; not even to thee, De Credá.

JUAN. (*without.*)

Nay, but thou must, or fail in honest truth.

I have thy promise once again to see me

Ere thy revengeful purpose take effect;

Yea, and I hold thee to it.

RASINGA.

Turn from my door, for thou since then hast seen me,
And hast no further claim.

JUAN. (*without.*)

Tamper not so unfairly with thy words :

I saw thee as the forest peasant sees

A hunted tiger passing to his lair.

Is this sufficient to acquit thee ? No ;

I claim thy promise still, as unredeem'd.

Unbar thy chamber door and let me in.

RASINGA. (*opening the door, and as Juan enters.*)

Come in, come in then, if it must be so.

Is misery a pleasant sight to thee,

That thou dost pray and beg to look upon it ?

JUAN.

Forgive me, brave Rasinga, if I say,

The mis'ry of thine alter'd face, to me

Is sight more welcome than a brow composed.

But 'tis again to change that haggard face

To the composure of a peaceful mind,

That I am come.—O deign to listen to me !

Let me beseech thee not to wreck thy happiness

For fell revenge !

RASINGA.

Well, well ; and were it so,
I wreck my happiness to save my honour.

JUAN.

To save thine honour ?

RASINGA.

Yes ; the meanest slave
That turns the stubborn soil with dropping brow,
Would hold an outraged, unrevenged chief
As more contemptible than torpid reptile
That cannot sting the foot which treads upon it.

JUAN.

When fear or sordid motives are imputed
As causes why revenge hath been forborne,
Contempt will follow, from the natural feelings
Of every breast, or savage or instructed.
But when the valiant and the generous pardon,
Ev'n instantly as lightning rends the trunk
Of the strong Nahagaha,* pride o' the wood,
A kindred glow of admiration passes
Through every manly bosom, proving surely,

* The iron tree.

That men are brethren, children of one sire,
The Lord of heaven and earth.

RASINGA.

Perplex me not with vain and lofty words,
Which to the stunn'd ear of an injur'd man
Are like the fitful sounds of a swoln torrent,
Noble, but void of all distinctive meaning.

JUAN.

Their meaning is distinct as well as noble ;
Teaching to froward man the will of God.

RASINGA.

And who taught thee to know this will of God ?

JUAN.

Our sacred Scripture.

RASINGA.

What? your Christian Scripture,
Which, as I have been told, hath bred more discord
Than all the other firebands of the earth,
With church oppos'd to church and sect to sect,
In fierce contention ; ay, fell bloody strife.
Certes, if all from the same book be taught,
Its words may have, as I before have said,
A noble sound, but no distinctive meaning.

JUAN.

That which thou hast been told of shameful discord,
Perversely drawn from the pure source of peace,
Is true ; and yet it is a book of wisdom,
Whose clear, important, general truths may guide
The simplest and the wisest : truths which still
Have been by every church and sect acknowledged.

RASINGA.

And what, I pray, are these acknowledged pre-
cepts

Which they but learn, it seems, to disobey ?

JUAN.

The love of God and of that blessed Being,
Sent in his love to teach his will to men ;
Imploring them their hearts to purify
From hatred, wrong, and ev'ry sensual excess,
That in a happier world when this is past,
They may enjoy true blessedness for ever.

RASINGA.

Then why hold all this coil concerning that
Which is so plain, and excellent, and acknowledged ?

JUAN.

Because they have in busy restless zeal

Rais'd to importance slight and trivial parts ;
Contending for them, till they have at last
Believ'd them of more moment, ev'en than all
The plain and lib'ral tenor of the whole.
As if we should maintain a wart or mole
To be the main distinctions of a man,
Rather than the fair brow and upright form,—
The graceful, general lineaments of nature.

RASINGA.

This is indeed most strange : how hath it been ?

JUAN,

The Scripture lay before them like the sky
With all its glorious stars, in some smooth pool
Clearly reflected, till in busy idleness,
Like children gath'ring pebbles on its brink,
Each needs must cast his mite of learning in
To try its depth, till sky and stars, and glory,
Become one wrinkled maze of wild confusion.
But that good Scripture and its blessed author
Stand far and far apart from all this coil,
As the bright sky from the distorted surface
Of broken waters wherein it was imaged.

RASINGA.

And this good Scripture does, as thou believest,
Contain the will of God.

JUAN.

I do believe it.

And therein is a noble duty taught,
To pardon injuries,—to pardon enemies.

RASINGA.

I do not doubt it. 'Tis an easy matter
For holy sage or prophet in his cell,
Who lives aloof from wrongs and injuries
Which other men endure, to teach such precepts.

JUAN.

Most justly urged: but he who utter'd this
Did not enforce it at a rate so easy.
Though proved by many good and marv'llous
acts

To be the mission'd son of the Most High,
He meekly bore the wrongs of wicked men;
And in the agonies of crucifixion,
The cruel death he died, did from his cross
Look up to heaven in earnest supplication

Ev'n for the men who were inflicting on him
Those shameful suff'rings,—pardon ev'n for them.

RASINGA. (*bowing his head and covering his face
with his hands.*)

Indeed, indeed, this was a noble Being.

JUAN.

Ay, brave Rasinga; ireful as thou art,
Thou hast a heart to own such excellence.

[*Laying his hand soothingly on Rasinga's.*
And do consider too how he who wrong'd thee,—
The youthful Samarkoon——

RASINGA. (*shaking off his hand impatiently.*)

Name not the villain.

JUAN.

That epithet belongs not to a youth,
Who in the fever'd madness of strong passion,
By beauty kindled, goaded by despair,
Perhaps with sympathy, for that he deem'd
A sister's sorrows——

RASINGA.

Hold thy peace, De Creda;
Thy words exasperate and stir within me
The half-spent flames of wrath.

He is a villain, an audacious villain ;
A most ungrateful, cunning, artful villain.
Leave me, I charge thee, lest thou utter that
Which might provoke me to unseemly outrage.
I owe my life to thee, and but for that——
Leave me, I charge thee.

JUAN.

I do not fear what thou may'st do to me.

RASINGA.

No ; but *I* fear it, therefore quit me instantly.
Out, out ! [*Opening the door and pushing him away.*]
Ho ! Ehleypoolie ! ye who wait without,
I want your presence here. [*Exit Juan.*]

Enter Ehleypoolie and Mihdoony.

EHLEYPOLIE. (*after having waited some time to receive the commands of his master, who without noticing him walks about the chamber in violent agitation.*)

My lord, we humbly wait for your commands.

(*aside to Mihdoony.*)

He heeds us not : as though we were not here.

(*aloud.*)

We humbly wait, my lord, to know your pleasure.

RASINGA.

My pleasure is——

[*Stopping, and looking bewildered.*

I know not what it is.

MIHDOONY.

Perhaps, my lord, you wish to countermand
Some orders that regard the executions,
Fix'd for to-morrow, at an hour so early.

RASINGA.

When did Rasinga countermand his orders,
So call'd for, and so given?—Why wait ye here?

EHLEYPOLIE.

You call'd for us, my lord; and well you know
That Ehleypoolie hath a ready aptness
For——

RASINGA.

Boasting, fooling, flattery, and lies.

Be gone, I say; I did not call for you.

At least I meant it not.

[*Turns away hastily and exit by another door.*

EHLEYPPOOLIE.

For boasting, fooling, flattery, and lies !
How angry men pervert all sober judgment !
If I commend myself, who like myself
Can know so well my actual claims to praise ?

MIHDOONY.

Most true, for surely no one else doth know it.

EHLEYPPOOLIE.

And fooling is an angry name for wit.

MIHDOONY.

Thy wit is fooling, therefore it should seem,
Thy fooling may be wit. Then for thy flattery,
What dost thou say to that ?

EHLEYPPOOLIE.

Had he dislik'd it,
It had been dealt to him in scantier measure.
And lies—to hear a prince whose fitful humours
Can mar or make the vassals who surround him,
Name this as special charge on any one !
His violent passions have reduced his judgment
To very childishness.

MIHDOONY.

But dost thou think the fierceness of his wrath

Will make him really bring to execution,
A wife who has so long and dearly loved him ?

EHLEYPPOOLIE.

How should I know what he will really do ?
The words he spoke to me ev'n now may show
thee

His judgment is obscured. But if he do,
Where is the harm when faded wives are cross
And will not live in quietness with a younger,
To help them on a step to their Newané ?
She never favour'd me, that dame Artina,
And I foresaw she would not come to good.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A large Court or open Space with every thing prepared for the execution of Samarkoon : a seat of state near the front of the stage.

Spectators and Guards discovered.

FIRST SPECTATOR.

There is a mass of life assembled here :
All eyes, no voice ; there is not even the murmur
Of stifled whispers.—Deep and solemn silence !

SECOND SPECTATOR.

Hush, hush ! Artina comes, and by her side,
Her son in the habiliments of one
Prepared for death. This surely cannot be :
It is impossible.

FIRST SPECTATOR.

I hope it is.

Enter Artina and Samar, with Sabawatte on the one side of them and Juan de Creda on the other ; attendants following.

ARTINA.

Alas, for thee, my noble, generous child !

SAMAR.

Fear not for me, dear mother ! Lean upon me.
Nay, let me feel your hand press'd on my shoulder,
Press'd more upon me still. It pleases me,
Weak as I am, to think I am thy prop.

ARTINA.

O what a prop thou would'st have been to me !
And what a creature for a loathly grave,—
For death to prey upon !—Turn, turn ! Oh, turn !
Advance no farther on this dreadful path.

SAMAR.

I came not here to turn ; and for the path,
And what it leads to, if you can endure it,
Then so can I :—fear not for me, dear mother !
Nay, do not fear at all ; 'twill soon be over.

ARTINA.

Oh ! my brave heart ! my anguish and my pride,

Even on the very margin of the grave.—
Good Sabawatte ! hold him ; take him from me.

SABAWATTE.

I cannot, madam ; and De Creda says,
'Tis best that you should yield to his desire.

ARTINA.

It is a fearful—an appalling risk.

SABAWATTE.

Is there aught else that you would charge me
with?

ARTINA.

Yes, dearest friend, there is—it is my last.
Let not my little daughters know of this ;
They are too young to miss me. Little Moora
Will soon forget that she has seen my face ;
Therefore whoc'er is kind to them they'll love.
Say this to her, who will so shortly fill
Their mother's place, and she will pity them.
Add, if thou wilt, that I such gentle dealings
Expected from her hands, and bade thee teach them
To love and honour her.

SABAWATTE.

My heart will burst in uttering such words.

ARTINA.

Yet for my sake thou'lt do it ; wilt thou not ?

[Sabawatte motions assent but cannot speak.

Enter Samarkoon chained and guarded.

ARTINA. *(rushing on to meet him.)*

My brother, my young Samarkoon, my brother,
Whom I so lov'd in early, happy days ;
Thou top and blossom of my father's house !

SAMARKOON.

Weep not, my sister, death brings sure relief ;
And many a brave man's son has died the death
That now abideth me.

ARTINA.

Alas ! ere that bright sun which shines so brightly
Shall reach his noon, of my brave father's race
No male descendant shall remain alive,—
Not one to wear the honours of his name,
And I the cursed cause of all this wreck !
Oh, what was I, that I presumptuously
Should think to keep his undivided heart !
'Twere better I had liv'd a drudge,—a slave,

To do the meanest service of his house,
Than see thee thus, my hapless, noble brother.

SAMARKOON.

Lament not, gentle sister ; to have seen thee
Debased and scorn'd, and that most wond'rous
creature,

Whose name I will not utter, made the means
Of vexing thee—it would have driven me frantic.
Then do not thus lament ; nor think that I
Of aught accuse thee. Let us now take leave,
In love most dearly link'd, which only death
Has power to sever.——

(to Samar, as first observing him.)

Boy, why art thou here?

SAMAR.

To be my mother's partner and companion.
'Tis meet ; for who but me should cling to her ?

*Enter Rasinga, and places himself in the seat : a
deep silence follows for a considerable time.*

MIHDOONY. *(who has kept guard with his spearmen
over Samarkoon, now approaching Rasinga.*

The hour is past, my lord, which was appointed ;

And you commanded me to give you notice.
Is it your pleasure that the executioners
Proceed to do their office on the prisoners,
Who are all three prepared ?

RASINGA.

What dost thou say ?

MIHDOONY.

The three prepared for death abide your signal.

RASINGA.

There are but two.

MIHDOONY.

Forgive opposing words, there is a third.

RASINGA.

A third, say'st thou ? and who ?

MIHDOONY.

Your son, my lord ;

A volunteer for death, whom no persuasion
Can move to be divided from his mother.

RASINGA.

I cannot credit this ; it is some craft,—
Some poor device. Go, bring the boy to me.

[Mihdoony leads Samar to his father.]

Why art thou here, my child? and is it so,
That thou dost wish to die?

SAMAR.

I wish to be where'er my mother is,
Alive or dead.

RASINGA.

Think well of what thou say'st!
It shall be so if thou indeed desire it.
But be advised; death is a dreadful thing.

SAMAR.

They say it is: but I will be with her;
I'll die her death, and feel but what she suffers.

RASINGA.

And art thou not afraid? Thou'rt ignorant;
Thou dost not know the misery of drowning;—
The booming waters closing over thee,
And thou still sinking, struggling in the tank,
On whose deep bottom weeds and water snakes,
And filthy lizards will around thee twine,
Whilst thou art choaking. It is horrible.

SAMAR.

The death that is appointed for my mother

Is good enough for me. We'll be together :
Clinging to her I shall not be afraid,
No, nor will she.

RASINGA.

But wherefore wilt thou leave thy father, Samar ?
Thou'st not offended me ; I love thee dearly ;
I have no son but thee.

SAMAR.

But thou wilt soon.
Thy new young wife will give thee soon another,
And he will be thy son ; but I will be
Son of Artina. We'll be still together :
When in the form of antelope or loorie,
She wends her way to Boodhoo, I shall still
Be as her young-one, sporting by her side.

RASINGA. (*catching him in his arms and bursting
into tears.*)

My generous boy ! my noble valiant boy !
O such a son bestowed on such a father !
Live, noble creature ! and thy mother also !
Her crime is pardon'd if it was a crime ;
Ye shall not be divided.

SAMAR. (*running back to Artina.*)

O mother ! raise your eyes ! you are to live ;
We're both to live, my father says we are.
And he has wept and he has kiss'd me too,
As he was wont to do, ay, fonder far.
Come, come ! [*Pulling her towards Rasinga.*
He's good, you need not fear him now.

RASINGA.

Artina, that brave child has won thy life ;
And he hath won for me——I have no words
That can express what he hath won for me.
But thou art sad and silent ; how is this,
With life and such a son to make life sweet ?

ARTINA.

I have a son, but my brave father, soon,—
Who died an honour'd death, and in his grave
Lies like an honour'd chief,—will have no son,
No male descendant, living on the earth
To keep his name and lineage from extinction.

[*Rasinga throws himself into his
seat and buries his face in his
mantle.*

FIRST SPECTATOR. (*in a low voice.*)

Well timed and wisely spoken : 'tis a woman,
Worthy to be the mother of that boy.

SECOND SPECTATOR. (*in a low voice to the first.*)

Look, look, I pray thee, how Rasinga's breast
Rises and falls beneath its silken vesture.

FIRST SPECTATOR. (*as before.*)

There is within a dreadful conflict passing,
Known by these tokens, as swoln waves aloft
Betray the secret earthquake's deep-pent struggles.

SECOND SPECTATOR. (*as before.*)

But he is calmer now, and puts away
The cover from his face : he seems relieved.

RASINGA. (*looking round him.*)

Approach, De Creda ; thou hast stood aloof :
Thou feel'st my late rude passion and unkind-
ness.

Misery makes better men than me unkind ;
But pardon me and I will make amends.

I would not listen to thy friendly council,
But now I will most freely grant to thee

Whatever grace or favour thou desirest.

Even now before thou nam'st it.

JUAN.

Thanks, thanks, Rasinga ! this is brave amends.

[Runs to Samarkoon and commands his chains to be knocked off, and speaking impatiently as it is doing.]

Out on such tardy bungling ! Ye are craftsmen
Who know full well the art to bind men's limbs,
But not to set them free.

[Leads Samarkoon when unbound towards Rasinga, speaking to him as they go.]

Come, noble Samarkoon ! nay, look more gracious :
If thou disdain'st to thank him for thy life,
That falls to me, and I will do it gladly.

(Presenting Samarkoon to Rasinga.)

This is the boon which thou hast granted me,
The life of Samarkoon : a boon more precious
To him who grants than who receives it. Yet
Take my most ardent thanks ; take many thanks
From other grateful bosoms, beating near thee.

ARTINA.

(kneeling to embrace the knees of Rasinga.)

And mine ; O mine ! wilt thou not look upon me ?
I do not now repine that thou art changed :

Be happy with another fairer dame,
It shall not grieve me now.

RASINGA. (*raising her.*)

Away, Artina ! do not thank me thus.

Remove her, Samarkoon, a little space.

[*Waving them off.*

Juan de Creda, art thou satisfied ?

Have I done well ?

JUAN.

Yes, I am satisfied.

RASINGA. (*drawing himself up with dignity.*)

But I am not ; and that which I have done

Would not have satisfied the generous Saviour

Who died upon the cross.—Thy friend is pardon'd,

And more than pardon'd ;—he is now my brother,

And I to him resign the mountain bride.

[*A shout of joy bursts from all around : Artina
folds Samar to her breast, and Samarkoon
falls at the feet of Rasinga.*

SAMARKOON.

My noble generous foe, whom I have wrong'd,

Urged by strong passions, wrong'd most grievously !

Now may I kneel to thee without disgrace,
For thou hast bound me with those bands of
strength
That do ennoble, not disgrace the bravest.

RASINGA.

Rise, Samarkoon; I do accept thy thanks
Since that which I resign is worth——But cease!
Speak not of this—if it be possible,
We'll think of this no more.

(turning to Artina.)

And now my only and my noble wife,
And thou, my dauntless boy, stand by my side,
And I, so flank'd, will feel myself in honour,—
Honour which lifts and warms and cheers the
heart.

And we shall have a feast within our walls;
Our good De Creda, he will tarry with us;
He will not go to-morrow as he threaten'd.

JUAN.

I'll stay with you a day beyond the time,
And then I must depart: a pressing duty
Compels me so to do.

RASINGA.

But thou'lt return again, and bring with thee
The sacred Book which thou hast told me of?

JUAN.

I will return again and bring that book
If heaven permit. But man's uncertain life
Is like a rain-drop hanging on the bough,
Amongst ten thousand of its sparkling kindred,
The remnants of some passing thunder shower,
Who have their moments, dropping one by one,
And which shall soonest lose its per'lous hold
We cannot guess.——

I, on the Continent, must for a time
A wand'rer be ; if I return no more,
You may conclude death has prevented me.

Enter Montebesa.

RASINGA.

Ha, mother ! welcome, welcome Montebesa !
There ; take again your daughter and her boy.
We've striven stoutly with a fearful storm,

But, thanks to good De Creda, it is past ;
And all the brighter shall our sky appear,
For that the clouds which have obscured its face,
Were of a denseness dark and terrible.

THE END.

N O T E S.

N O T E S.

NOTE I. p. 5.

“ *With bleeding limbs drain'd by a hundred leeches.*”

Very small leeches which infest many of the woods of Ceylon, and torment travellers.

NOTE II. p. 16.

—————“ *Doombra's mountain ridge*
“ *Dividing ardent heat from chilling clouds,*” &c.

A high mountainous ridge in Ceylon, where the one side is sunny, clear, and warm, the other cloudy, wet, and cold.

NOTE III. p. 25.

“ *Ev'n like Niwané when the virtuous soul,*” &c.

The final reward of the virtuous after death, according to the Boodhoo religion, is perfect rest or insensibility; and that state, or the region in which it takes place, is called Niwané.

NOTE IV. p. 61.

“ *When Boodhoo's rays, beneath the noon's blue dome,*” &c.

Bright rays which appear in the middle of the day, surpassing the brightness of the sun, and are supposed to foretel evil.

NOTE V. p. 69.

“ *Oh Kattragam, terrific deity !*” &c.

The name of the Cingalese Spirit of Evil, or God of Destruction

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